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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that examined the role of teacher leadership in school restructuring are presented in this paper. The teacher restructuring project implemented at an elementary school in Brookline, Massachusetts, was based on team teaching, school-university collaboration, integrated remediation, and alternative teacher roles. Methodology involved interviews with project teachers, the principal, and administrators; document analysis; and onsite observation. Findings indicate that teachers' low status and lack of formal authority hindered effective leadership. Factors for successful teacher leadership included principal support, strong communicative and administrative skills, an understanding of organizational culture, and a reexamination of traditional patterns of power and authority in school systems. Conclusions are that: (1) teachers can successfully initiate school change; (2) any change affects other parts of the organization, whose support must be enlisted for success; and (3) colleges and schools involved in a cooperative project must be willing to risk significant structural alteration. That a small, liberal school encountered difficulties in restructuring implies a greater challenge for larger, less flexible school systems. (Contains 49 references.) (LMI)

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School Restructuring by Teachers: A Study of the Teaching Project at the Edward Devotion School

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School Restructuring by Teachers: A Study of the Teaching Project at the Edward Devotion School

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Calls for restructuring fill the current literature on school reform, and school districts around the country are in the process of initiating projects to restructure their schools. A small number of these restructuring projects have been initiated and led by teachers, but as yet, little has been written documenting the experience of classroom practitioners involved in such efforts. The purpose of this study is to add teachers' voices to the literature on school restructuring and school leadership.

Introduction

The Teaching Project at the Edward Devotion School is a restructuring effort developed by two teachers, Vivian Troen and me, at our public elementary school in Brookline, Massachusetts. The project, initiated in 1987, was designed to dramatically change the work of teachers while improving pre-service education and mainstreaming special needs students more effectively into the regular classroom. During the first year of the project three classroom teachers (one fourth grade and two third grade teachers) and a half-time special education teacher worked as a team at the Devotion School. By the fifth year, the project had grown to include six teams of teachers (21 teachers) and 18 graduate student interns in five schools.

The Teaching Project at Devotion School had four components:

1) **Team Teaching:** Teachers, functioning as a team, shared curriculum and children. Team meetings were scheduled during the school day and one full Saturday a month, and team decisions were made by consensus.

2) **School/University Collaboration:** Full-time graduate student interns from Wheelock College worked in the teams for the entire school year. One team member supervised these students and co-taught their graduate-level curriculum seminar with a Wheelock faculty member.

3) **Integrated Remediation:** All special needs children were fully mainstreamed in the team; they were taught by the classroom teachers and a half-time remediation specialist who was a member of the team.

4) **Alternative Roles for Teachers:** Each classroom teacher was provided with a minimum of one day a week (six hours) away from teaching duties to assume an alternative role--curriculum writer, researcher, or student-teacher supervisor/college teacher. This "Alternative Professional Time" (APT Time) wass facilitated by the full-time presence of teaching interns.

In an earlier paper (Boles, 1990), I examined data from the first year of the Teaching Project at Devotion School, and studied the ways in which the team of previously independent teachers functioned interdependently in this restructured model.

This current paper, which draws its data from an expanded study of the second, third and fourth years of the project, examines another aspect of the Teaching Project: teacher leadership in school restructuring. This paper will trace the development of leadership in the project, catalogue the ingredients of teacher leadership that enabled the project to succeed and will highlight the benefits as well as the drawbacks of teacher-initiated restructuring. It will focus, in addition, on the problems the first team of teachers encountered as they attempted to change the school in which they taught, as well as the supports that will be necessary if teachers are to assume leadership in school reform.

Theoretical Framework

Teacher leadership has recently become a topic of some interest to researchers and policymakers. Some see teacher leadership as a way to change the "careerlessness" of teaching (Sykes, 1983, p. 110) and open options for teachers based on their skill, energy and commitment (Little, 1988). Others see it as a means "of fashioning new ways of working with the school community" (Lieberman, 1988, p. 165). Whatever form it takes, teacher leadership is inevitably intertwined with the concepts of the professionalization of teaching and the empowerment of teachers (Little, 1988; Devaney, 1987).

The idea of teacher leadership is not new. Indeed, teachers have long filled informal and formal leadership roles in schools. Some teacher leaders organize teacher centers, or work long hours for teachers' unions. Others provide curricular leadership for individuals at their grade levels, or participate in district-wide curriculum committees. Some serve as mentors for new teachers or work with veteran teachers who need support. Some are hired as staff developers and leave classroom teaching, while others are designated as team leaders and remain in classrooms. One thing all teacher leadership efforts have in common, though, is that they are based on teachers exerting influence beyond their isolated classrooms, and playing important roles in the larger arena of the school and school district.

Structural, Organizational leadership

A form of teacher leadership that is relatively new is one in which groups of teachers take the initiative to "redesign their work and augment their formal authority at their own school sites" (Johnson, 1990b, p. 348). At the Key School in Indianapolis, Indiana, teachers "designed a school from scratch and convinced the district to fund it" (Olson, Education Week, 1/27/88). In Sanford, Maine a group of first, second and third grade teachers developed a multi-level program that "provides an opportunity for children to interact and be grouped for instruction based on individual readiness to learn skills--both academic and social" (Radius, July/August, 1988). At Hope Essential High School in Providence, Rhode Island and at Central Park East Secondary School in New York City "teachers are creating totally new schools, and in the process, redefining the educational mission and the role of teachers" (Rosow and Zager, 1989, p. 21). And at the Devotion School teachers initiated the Teaching Project.

In each of these cases of organizational and structural leadership, teachers have been involved in restructuring their own work, and as these successful programs demonstrate, this new form of teacher leadership can offer an alternative to "top-down," administratively-mandated models of school reform.

However, this form of leadership is relatively rare and runs contrary to the way things work in most school districts, where, according to Johnson, teachers "have an implicit treaty with school administrators guaranteeing

autonomy in their classrooms in exchange for knowing their place and leaving school management to others" (1990b, p. 348). Moreover, teacher leadership in organizational reform is difficult because teachers have "little formal authority and limited political influence" in the schools in which they work.

Even though reform reports in the late 1980s proposed a variety of ways in which schools and classrooms could be reorganized to promote teacher leadership beyond the boundaries of the classroom (Devaney, Carnegie, Holmes, Little), such restructured models are still few in number. The paucity of examples of teachers taking structural leadership in schools should come as no surprise. The formulation and development of new programs and structural reforms has never been considered the work of teachers: it is the teacher's job to carry out plans developed by others at higher levels in the school hierarchy.

An examination of the sociological context of schoolteaching explains the situation. Dan Lortie, in his classic study, Schoolteacher (1975), reports that "Teaching was initiated as contractual, salaried work in early colonial times" (p. 23) and the organization of teachers' tasks and norms of practice have changed little since then. Teachers have been "subordinates," whose workplace "is not organized to promote inquiry" (p. 56) and teaching is an "unstaged" career where all teachers are equal, where opportunities for career growth are limited, and where workers are isolated from one another in a "cellular pattern of organization" (p. 83) which prevents collegial interaction. Teachers function much like nineteenth century factory workers who would have deemed it inappropriate or useless to tell the bosses how to restructure the assembly line.

According to Lortie, teachers enter the field after only a short training period which lacks academic rigor (p. 160), and "teachers' doubts about possessing a common technical culture...make them less ready to assert their authority on educational matters "(p. 80.) Furthermore, as a group, they are inclined toward conservative and "present rather than future oriented" behavior. Lortie states that "Occupations shape people" (p.55) and the occupation of teaching as it has been structured does not encourage risk-taking or questioning of the status quo.

Studies have, for many years, documented teachers' dissatisfaction with their work situation. In The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change (1971), Seymour Sarason noted teachers' "resentment about having little or nothing to say about decisions that could or would affect their work" (p. 160). The Boston Women's Teachers' Group (Freedman, Jackson and Boles, 1983), in a study based on interviews of teachers who had worked in schools from five to thirty years, reported that the majority of the teachers they interviewed were dissatisfied with many aspects of their work, felt isolated, and regretted that they wielded no power beyond the classroom door. The teachers recognized that the committees on which they served made few substantive decisions and the recommendations such committees developed were frequently ignored by school officials. The group concluded that schools had "isolated individual teachers, granting each teacher autonomy to make and carry out the difficult decisions herself while the real agenda is determined outside the classroom" (p. 296).

This message is repeated by Johnson in her analysis of the domains of decision-making in schools. Johnson found that though teachers have great decision-making power within the confines of the classroom, they did not participate in school-wide decision-making "...despite the fact that important decisions....that affect teachers' work, such as scheduling, the assignment of specialists, student placement, discipline, grading, tenure and the allocation of supplies" (p. 348) were made at that level. She reported further that "teachers are pessimistic about their power to influence school-wide policy, largely because they expect principals to discount or disregard their views" (p. 348).

A number of researchers have reported that though teachers may be powerless in the determination of policy, they are far from powerless when it comes to policy implementation. Larry Cuban, in an article on cycles of reform efforts, went so far as to state that "few reforms aimed at the classroom make it past the door permanently" (Cuban,1990, p.3). And Huberman and Miles (1986), in an article analyzing change in schools report that

> ...organizational change occurs in a complex, continuously negotiated power field, in which some parties wield more influence than others, but the others are never powerless...Senior administrators in a school system have the power to adopt innovations...but managers don't execute innovations, teachers do; and if teachers decide not to execute

> the innovation, managers will find themselves institutionalizing placebos...(Huberman and Miles, p. 71)

This recognition that teachers wield considerable, though negative power, is repeated by Gene Maeroff, in his statement that the "...power struggle between the reformers who would impose top-down change on teachers rather than letting it come up from the teachers ends up producing no change at all"(p. 52). And, unfortunately, according to Maeroff, the kind of power teachers have is "veto power" (p. 52).

The research makes it clear that the norms of teaching, teachers' subordinate position in the school hierarchy, and lack of positive and substantive decision-making power have combined to make it unlikely for teachers to initiate positive change.

Increased interest in teacher empowerment, collegiality (Little, 1987) and school-based management, though, demonstrates a move toward changing the subordinate role of the teacher in the school and recognizing teachers' potential power to make positive change. The current examples of teacher-initiated restructuring offer an alternative to the passive or oppositional role teachers have traditionally played in school reform. These projects are all new, and it must be acknowledged that there are still few examples of teacher-initiated efforts at structural change. But given an understanding of how critical it is to have teacher support in order for reform efforts to succeed, it is essential that we begin to analyze existing examples of substantive school change, which have, in Maeroff's words, "come up from the teachers" (Maeroff, p. 52).

Description of the Site

The Edward Devotion School

The Edward Devotion School, with over seven hundred pupils and seventy-five full and part-time faculty members, is the largest public elementary in Brookline, Massachusetts. Situated in one of Brookline's most densely populated neighborhoods, it is, like the seven other elementary schools in town, a kindergarten through grade 8 building.

The school has a multi-ethnic population. It includes the children of middle-class white and black families, children from a largely white housing project in the neighborhood, children of Asian immigrants, and children from around the world whose parents study or teach at Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, or the world class teaching hospitals in the area.

The vast majority of Devotion's faculty has been hired by Gerald Kaplan, the school's principal for twenty years, who states that the most important thing he does in the school is "to hire the best teachers that are available" and then give them independence and encouragement to be "risk-takers." The school is an openly friendly place, and Kaplan is an affable man who is well-liked by the faculty.

Kaplan believes that individual teachers should have the ultimate right to choose what they do in their classrooms, and his management style is decidedly non-directive. Every classroom is highly personalized and the school includes a potpourri of teaching styles. Classrooms, even at the same grade level, look and feel quite different. Though the teachers in the school vary a great deal, they generally recognize each other for the fine teachers they are, and for the most part, feel great respect for one another.

Kaplan supports the teachers in their efforts to try new things. As Kaplan asserts:

> I believe in change... Change is the most stimulating thing you can do. Every year should be different....If we're not doing things differently from one year to the next then we get stale and uninteresting and dull, and if we're dull then we're providing a dull program for kids and they will feel it, and we don't want that at this school.

Kaplan likes to think of the Devotion School as a family, and he makes serious efforts to build community among the school's very large staff. But maintaining communication and a sense of community among the school's highly independent staff is no easy feat, and some of the major complaints of faculty at Devotion revolve around issues of isolation and lack of communication. Teachers complain they don't see colleagues from one end of the week to the other. Many complain that the school is "just too big."

The Devotion School reflects the philosophy of all the public schools of the Town of Brookline. The district is liberal, relatively affluent, and well-

equipped. It advocates teacher empowerment and has a history of respect and appreciation for the work teachers do. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, in a description of teachers at Brookline High School, one of the six schools she cites in her 1983 study of "good" American high schools, notes that teachers there are supported in their individuality and that "there is little pressure to conform to prescribed patterns or styles from administrators or colleagues...differences are valued. "(p. 209) Lightfoot particularly highlights the teachers' willingness to take risks, and their "unusual openness to change." (p. 218)

Devotion School has much in common with the high school, and it would seem that such a school would be the ideal setting for a substantive school reform effort initiated by teachers to emerge and flourish. But Brookline is not a school district that considers itself either to be in crisis or in need of major structural overhaul, and in this "good" school system many innovative ideas emerge on a regular basis. The Brookline Early Education Project, for example, pioneered publicly-funded early childhood education in the 1960s, and "Facing History and Ourselves," a nationally-used social studies curriculum about the Holocaust, was originally developed by Brookline teachers. And, currently, in these years of tight education budgets, the many good ideas of Brookline teachers compete for increasingly scarce resources.

When teacher-initiated reform emerges in such a school district, one can expect the teachers' experiences to be different from those of teachers who initiate restructuring in other more or less liberal and affluent school districts. The process of change is inevitably complicated, though, wherever it appears, and an assortment of the factors that inhibited and enhanced the change process in Brookline exist in different degrees in school districts with very different circumstances.

The Structure and Organization of the Teaching Project

The four project components -- team-teaching, school/university collaboration, integrated remediation, and alternative roles for teachers -- formed the basis of the Teaching Project at Devotion School.

The project teachers spent the week before school opened in 1987 deciding how to make the four project components into a workable project.

Their decisions were complicated and reflected a week of intense discussion. All decisions about how to implement the four components were reached by consensus. With very few alterations, the decisions the teachers made remained intact until the fourth year of the project. The teachers agreed that:

1) Project participants would team-teach in science and reading.

2) Science would be taught twice a week in hour-and-a-half blocks of time. Various configurations of teachers and interns would co-teach science to four mixed-age and ability groups of children. These groups would change four times during the year.

3) Reading would be taught three times a week in 40 minute blocks. Each intern and teacher would instruct her/his reading group and the groups would meet simultaneously. The reading groups would change five times during the school year.

4) Interns would begin to teach reading groups as soon as school began, and would gradually be included in the teaching of science (science instruction was to begin in late October). Interns would have increasing responsibilities in all other areas throughout the year.

5) The remediation specialist would teach a reading group and a science group. She would be in classrooms during writing and math periods to assist children with identified special needs, and she would be available for consultation with team members at other times during the school day. The remediation specialist would be considered a full member of the team and would attend all team meetings even though she was working only half-time.

6) Every effort would be made to provide all services for remedial, non-English speaking and gifted children within the structure of the project. It was decided that pull-out programs of any kind would be discouraged.

7) An aide provided by the principal would be used to instruct small groups of children and would perform clerical duties for the team.

8) The time during the week when teachers assumed the new roles of researcher, teacher/trainer and curriculum writer was given the name Alternative Professional Teaching Time (APT Time). The teachers had already noticed that members of the school community had begun to refer to this time as their "free time" or "release time," and they were concerned that such connotations would make that work seem less important. They, therefore, gave the time an official name.

Some changes in these basic arrangements were instituted each year. A fourth classroom teacher was added to the team in the second year. In that same year, the team lost the part-time aide they had had in the first year, and they decided that the special needs teacher would no longer teach science, but

would instead use that part of her time to support the teachers in social studies instruction.

During the third year, a drop in enrollment at fourth grade meant that one of the team classrooms had to be eliminated. Troen volunteered to give up her classroom so that she could increase her role in coordinating the project. In addition, principal Gerald Kaplan took a year-long leave of absence and his assistant principal took over his post.

Finally, in the fourth year, the remediation specialist moved to another school to assume a nearly full-time position. With the support of Kaplan, who had returned to Devotion during the summer, the team hired a new remediation specialist. The closed fourth grade was reopened, and that position was shared by Vivian Troen and me.

In the fourth year, the team wanted to alter its team-teaching arrangement in order to have longer periods of time to team-teach and hold team meetings. To accommodate the teachers' new idea, the principal rearranged the master schedule so that on three days each week they would have two-and-a-half-hour blocks of time in which to team-teach, as well as an afternoon each week during school time to conduct a two-hour team meeting.

This brief summary demonstrates both the complexity of the teachers' implementation plan, and the dynamic nature of the Teaching Project.

Teacher Leadership in Action: The History of the Teaching Project

Vivian Troen and I had each taught ten years at the Devotion School when we began feeling that teaching and schools needed to change, and change dramatically. We both loved teaching, thrived on interactions with our students, and regularly wrote and implemented new curriculum units. But we were dissatisfied. We were aware of the sameness of our jobs year after year. We felt isolated from other teachers and in subtle competition with them for the best classes, the best schedules, and scarce resources such as instructional aide time. We were disturbed by what we perceived to be the deteriorating quality of our student teachers, and we noted that the most needy of our students had the most fragmented schedules and were "pulled out" of our classes frequently during the school day.

Troen and I shared many of Lieberman's "entry characteristics" for teacher leaders (Lieberman, 1988, p. 150). We were considered "risk-takers" in a school where it was safe to take risks, and where risk-taking was encouraged. We were secure in our jobs, having been tenured for many years, and we were recognized as "master teachers" in the school.

In addition, we had each established ourselves as leaders in the wider school district. We had served on town-wide committees and were well-known in the community. In 1985, we had initiated a district-wide staff development task force to address teachers' discontent with staff development offerings, and in so doing, we had learned a great deal about the culture and politics of the Brookline Public Schools.

I had been involved in a study funded by the National Institute of Education on "The Effect of Teaching on Teachers" and had read widely and thought a great deal about school and institutional change. Troen had strong organizational skills. She had been a political activist for many years and had been instrumental in organizing a local drama group. I had the reputation of being a "team-player," and since I had served as the Chairperson of the Brookline Teachers' Center a number of years earlier, I had long-standing relationships with many teachers in the school district.

Troen and I complemented each other, and we worked together well. We had co-authored a peer-tutoring curriculum for ESL students and their English-speaking classmates, and we had shared a classroom of 40 fourth graders for two years. We found that we challenged and stimulated each other's thinking, and because we both believed that schools needed to change dramatically, we spent a good deal of time thinking and writing about how we would go about restructuring our work and the school in which we taught.

We believed that teachers should not have to leave classroom teaching in order to assume leadership roles in their schools, and we believed that teachers who remained in the classroom could be more credible to other teachers as forces for change than those who left teaching to assume leadership roles in school administration or in central office curriculum development positions.

Getting Started

We were two teachers with a vision for structural changes in schools. We developed that vision by writing about it, talking about it, recruiting allies. The school district and our school principal did not discourage us. We received a small grant in February 1986 to develop a college/school collaborative, and we were careful to include school committee members, teachers from Brookline High School and the Devotion School, as well as central office administrators and college people in our discussions. We built a support base.

Despite this effort to build support, when we first proposed what was to become the Teaching Project to central office officials in Brookline, our idea was dismissed as too costly and too complicated. Recognizing that if we wanted our ideas to succeed, we would have to move simultaneously on a number of fronts, we wrote an article outlining our ideas that was published on the Commentary page of Education Week. We took our idea to Wheelock College, the State Commissioner of Education and the Director of the state-supported Field Center for Teaching and Learning and solicited their support. We convinced our principal of the merit of our ideas. The teachers union in Brookline showed little interest in the project, beyond making sure that its various facets did not violate the teachers' contract.

Our efforts to find like-minded teachers interested in joining us in our project took time and cajoling. Even in a school district where risk-taking was encouraged, it wasn't easy to find allies. Ultimately, we were able to enlist two long-time colleagues in our plan. They were ready to try something new, and they knew us well and trusted us.

With the school principal's approval, we two teachers conducted all financial and structural negotiations with Wheelock College and the State Commissioner's office, and finally, just before school closed in June 1987, the structure was in place and sufficient funding had been obtained for the first year of the project's operation. The funding, which totaled $23,000, was earmarked for stipends for the graduate student interns who would work in teachers' classrooms for the full 180-day school year, for summer planning time for project teachers, and for monthly Saturday planning workshops for teachers and interns.

Once the money was finalized and it was clear that all parties were committed to the project, Jerry Kaplan reworked the master schedule for the

1987-1988 school year so that team members would have three common planning times as well as a part-time aide. Of this initial period, Kaplan says:

> I think that the Teaching Project went a long way in the minds of Troen and Boles...before I became involved in it. I think that they must have had a certain amount of confidence that this was a school where there was a chance that they could put their ideas into effect...I feel that I encouraged them to pursue the idea...And I felt all along that it had real merit in terms of teachers, themselves, really creating something.

We were two teachers who understood, probably as much as any two teachers could, the culture of schools and the policies of our school district, and this was not our first foray into teacher leadership. Despite these advantages, it took long, hard work for our ideas to become a reality. As Johnson remarked about us in her article "Teachers, Power and School Change":

> These teachers, who certainly were not naive about the difficulties of organizational change, found the demands that this effort placed on their time and ingenuity daunting. One might question whether less sophisticated and less committed individuals might fail to persist as they have. (1990b, p. 359)

The reasons for our struggles are difficult to understand without a brief examination of school organization and the experience of change in such an institution. According to Johnson,

> the rigid and segmented character of most school districts--their hierarchical structure, binding rules, standardized procedures, blocked schedules, line-item budgets, and isolated classrooms--constrain all who would improve public education. (1990b, p.352)

Though segmentalism, according to Rosabeth Moss Kanter in The Change Masters, "keeps an organization steady, on course," it also "makes it harder for the organization to move beyond its existing capacity in order to innovate and improve" (1983, p. 31). Kanter continues: "Segmentalism sets in when people are never given the chance to think beyond the limits of their job--to see it in a larger context, to contribute what they know from doing it to the search for even better ways."

Teacher leadership implies thinking "beyond the limits" of the job of teacher, and since the idea of crossing authority boundaries is so foreign to the segmented culture of schools, teachers who exercise leadership are likely to encounter roadblock after roadblock as the system attempts to maintain itself in equilibrium. Teacher leadership in structural, organizational reform goes decidedly against the way schools run.

Internal Leadership in the Teaching Project

Once the Teaching Project was funded and I began graduate work, Vivian Troen assumed responsibility for the project, handling the bulk of the project's political work. She advocated for the team with the State Commissioner of Education and at all levels of the school system. She learned about budgets and how to get the money that had been promised to the team. She negotiated with Devotion School specialists, district special education and Title I administrators, Wheelock College faculty and administration. The team members acknowledged Troen's expertise and accepted her leadership.

Team members were running their own show. Communication with the school principal was minimal. Trusting that all was going well, he rarely visited the teachers' classrooms. He felt that this was the teachers' project and that he should not interfere. He did worry about the team's lack of communication with him and with the rest of the faculty, but as he said, "the key to this whole project was that this was the teachers' thing and...the principal should be there to support and help and guide, but not in any way to lead."

Troen was a forceful leader outside the context of the team, but within the team, her leadership role was understated. Though she held firmly to her belief in the project's four components, she also believed that team decisions should be reached by consensus, and that the team, not she, should make decisions about its destiny. As a result, she often did not voice her opinions, or she went along with team decisions though she sometimes said she wished they had been different. Not surprisingly then, the other teachers felt ownership of the project--it was their project, not imposed on them by the teacher leader. At the outset, the team had defined itself as an equal-status work group, and Troen's decision to avoid taking a dominant role in that group helped empower

all the group's members. As Kanter maintains, "empowering more people...increases the total capacity for effective action" (1977, p. 166).

The teachers agreed that team leadership should be rotated on a monthly basis. This made decision-making less efficient, which sometimes frustrated Troen, but it served to build team loyalty. The Teaching Project belonged to all the team members. One teacher described the equality of team members in this way:

> I felt my input was as important as anybody else's so that if I argued well, and presented a credible case I could sway the group, and I felt as though I was listened to...it was a necessary ingredient for all of us to feel that we were listened to and that our suggestions were valid within the group.

The feeling of shared responsibility for the team and the belief that every team member's opinion was equally valuable were important ingredients in the internal success of the Teaching Project.

The team members recognized, though, that Troen had more power than they had in the world outside the team. She met regularly with central office and college administrators, and she had more information than the other team members about how the project was faring in the larger school environment and in its efforts to expand. Team members also recognized the great amount of time and effort that went into maintaining this influence. As one teacher stated:

> I think all of us really would like to share the power... but you can't have power without responsibility. You have to say, Ok, I'll go to this meeting and I'll do that which will, in effect, make you more powerful because you will be the person they'll come to and you'll be the name they'll connect with. I have been around long enough to know that they go hand in hand, so I feel very powerful within this small area and I don't really care to be any more powerful than that because I don't have the time, energy, inclination to do it.

But the other team members' increasing commitment to the project and their interest in its survival meant that they, too, became involved in the politics surrounding the project. They recognized their limitations in this area, though, and as one teacher stated:

> One of the weaknesses of this project is how hard it is for long-term, seasoned practitioners to make the switch to being politically savvy and perpetuating this program, because that requires you to think in a different way. It requires a mind shift... You have to go from being an educator to being a politically savvy organizer... It's a weakness because we're not used to it. We're not particularly savvy. I like to think we are, but we make mistakes right and left. We're very here and now, we're very involved in the nitty gritty.

Members of the Original Team and Teacher Leadership

Interestingly, with the exception of Troen, the members of the original Teaching Project team had little interest in leadership. They recognized the leadership skills of the co-founders, and stated that they valued our work, but they did not consider themselves to be teacher leaders, nor were they interested in many aspects of leadership. As one teacher remarked in the fourth year :

> I think you and Vivian are teacher leaders. You had a vision -- you collected disciples who wanted to buy into that vision, and in a sense you led by example, by involvement. You weren't [administrative] leaders in the town of Brookline, but you created this team. And you continue to put energy into it.

In response to the question, "Do you consider yourself to be a leader?" one of the teachers stated:

> I feel a kind of mutual keeping this thing going--but I don't feel like a leader in any other context. It's not like anyone comes to me to ask about what we're doing, and I'm not out proselytizing or any of that. It's like we're in our own little world. There's no other context, in a sense....

Another added:

> If somebody came and wrote an article about us and it was in a magazine, then I might feel like a leader in the field, because we're doing something different. But not in a personal sense, I don't feel like a leader.

These teachers, much like those in McLaughlin and Yee's study, "School as a Place to Have a Career," were more interested in teaching and life in the classroom than they were "in moving vertically into quasi-administrative or

expanded teaching functions [or] horizontally into administrative or central-office resource positions" (1988, p. 24).

On the other hand, the teachers did not resent the project co-founders' interest in leadership in the larger forums of the school district and the college, and they were supportive of the leaders' efforts. In fact, when Troen was not working full-time in the team during the third year, one of the teachers remarked:

> Vivian is still the spiritual leader of this team, there is no question. I think the team is very dependent on her and part of it is that she has always been willing to put in the extra energy to see that the thing keeps going, to see them philosophically dealt with fairly, and that the issues of power are answered...she is relentless about that, and I don't know whether any of us would be relentless if it came to the whole framework collapsing.

Kanter, in Men and Women of the Corporation, discusses leadership in terms of power. She describes power as "the ability to get things done, to get and use whatever it is that a person needs for the goals he or she is attempting to meet" (1977, p. 166), and she describes effective leadership as

> ...power outward and upward in the system: the ability to get for the group, for subordinates or followers, a favorable share of the resources, opportunities, and rewards possible through the organization. This has less to do with how leaders relate to followers than with how they relate to other parts of the organization. (p. 166)

Thus, internally, the team's shared leadership enhanced the team members' commitment to the Teaching Project. And, externally, it was Troen's determination to spread the ideas of the Teaching Project, her understanding of the school organization, and her skill at functioning politically in the larger organization of the school district and the college, that facilitated the project's growth.

Leadership in the Context of the School, the School District and the College

At the end of the first year, the Teaching Project expanded. A new team member was added to the first team and a second group of third and fourth grade teachers at Devotion School agreed to become a team and join the

project. Though all the first team's members were supportive of this expansion, Troen was the teacher who was most interested in the project's continued growth, and she was the only member who actively lobbied for the project's expansion. As she saw it, this project was the beginning of an exciting way to restructure schools and teaching. She attended all expansion meetings and chaired many of them. She arranged for the two Devotion teams to present their project to the Brookline School Committee in February 1989, and she played a significant role in finding outside funding for the project's second year.

Early in the second year, when the Devotion teachers requested that the project be expanded beyond the two teams at their school, their request was denied by the assistant superintendent, who was concerned about cross-town equity issues. She wanted the project to expand to other Brookline schools rather than be concentrated at Devotion, the town's largest elementary school, and one which other schools felt had "favored status." A report from an outside evaluator, published in early 1989, recognized the value of the project and called for a project coordinator. At this point, Brookline and Wheelock agreed to hire a part-time coordinator and underwrite the project's expansion to other Brookline schools.

Two of the teachers in the "downstairs" team shared the job of coordinator through June, 1989. One, Betsy Lake, was paid a part-time salary (.1 of her salary) and took on organizational tasks such as arranging for the placement of interns. Vivian Troen assumed another .1 job and began the work of coordinating the existing teams, reaching out to other teachers, and expanding the project into Boston and other Brookline Schools.

At the end of the school year, Lake decided against continuing in this leadership role, and with increased funding coming from the school district for the next school year, Troen expanded her coordinator's role to half-time. Lake described her frustration with the position:

> In your classroom you could control things, but here you were dealing with all kinds of adults, no control, politics...and I was watching people who I thought were interested in the success of this thing too and watching some behaviors which astounded me. Really counterproductive. And I thought, why am I doing this? I was neutral in it. I was facilitating things happening ...Well, I did the best I could and nobody else was doing it.

When I asked her to describe how she felt about her role as coordinator, she replied that what she found most difficult and disturbing was that this work "didn't have anything to do with teaching at all" and "the politics [of recruiting and placing interns] ended up consuming so much...energy."

Troen, on the other hand, reveled in the politics. During the third year of the project, Troen, as project coordinator, met regularly with each team in Boston and Brookline. She worked with the Steering Committee and Management Team in the Brookline/Wheelock Collaborative (the name the exdpanded project had chosen for itself) to develop job descriptions and formalize the roles of classroom teachers, college supervisors and school administrators; to standardize and equalize teams; and to develop a joint philosophy. She learned how to negotiate for funding and salaries, and she enjoyed the political strategizing that was necessary in order to expand the project.

Troen believed strongly that teachers should work as teams, meeting regularly, sharing curriculum, co-teaching groups of children. It was one of the tenets of the original project, and an aspect of the project that had drawn Wheelock College into the collaboration. Troen also believed that interns should be active members of the teams, and that teachers needed instruction in clinical supervision in order to work more effectively with their interns. To accomplish these goals, she organized two afternoon meetings, a full-day workshop, and a three-day training session during the third year to instruct the teachers in team-building and the supervision of student teachers.

Many of the teachers were stimulated and appreciative of Troen's efforts. But Troen found it difficult to convince the teachers of the value of this new conceptualization of team teaching and collaborative pre-service teacher education, and some teachers in the other teams were unhappy with her leadership style.

Troen was not the only teacher from the original team of Devotion teachers who felt it was difficult to convince other teachers of the merit of the original project's components. When other members of the original team attempted to share what they had learned with the new teams in Brookline and Boston, they reported that they were surprised and disappointed by their colleagues' lack of interest. As one team member noted:

> ...even in the course of our working together [with the upstairs team], we've had very little dialogue...they're interested in doing it the way that they're doing it, and that's fine, but there's no talking about it. There's no chance for us to say--hey, this didn't work, or, don't bother with this...

Another team member remarked:

> There seems to be a sense of territory that people have, that initially shocked me, that--with the upstairs group--there was a sense that they needed their own space, and in a sense they viewed us as a rival in a way. And I'm not sure what contributed to that.

He went on to note, though, that perhaps this was part of the developmental nature of change, and that with the addition of new teams in the third year, "These teams are changing, and that's a positive part of it. And maybe we are just farther down the evolutionary sequence than they are."

Another of the teachers was not as positive. In the project's fourth year, this teacher, the representative from the original Devotion team to the Learning/Teaching Collaborative's Management Team, stated:

> ...we've tried [to help other teams get started] through the management team...but it's becoming clearer and clearer that people throughout the town who are doing this want the definition of what it means to have a kind a team approach to be very, very flexible...that other people are coming at it from their own direction...I felt like last year and the year before...that people might have come to us and said, "Help us get set up--or how do we think about this?" It didn't happen...I thought that that might have happened on an interpersonal basis...but it really didn't happen.

At issue was the "egalitarian ethic" of teaching, and teachers' reluctance to follow the ideas of their peers. The district-wide ethic of teacher independence contributed to teachers' reluctance to follow the ideas of another teacher, and this was supported further by the assistant superintendent, who made it clear to teachers that they were free to develop their teams to suit themselves.

Thus, Troen's efforts to develop the new teams using the four components of the Teaching Project as a philosophical base met with resistance. Troen's authority was ambiguous, and she was perceived by some of

the teachers as demanding and single-minded. Had she had the authority of an administrator, it is possible that her actions would have been viewed differently, but she was a teacher with no more formal authority than her peers, and her leadership style at times worked to her disadvantage. A few of the teachers in the Learning/Teaching Collaborative were dissatisfied with Troen's leadership, one stating that during the project's third year she felt "pressured to be like Devotion," and she didn't like it.

At the end of the third year, Troen decided to resign as coordinator, citing her desire to return to full-time classroom teaching and her belief that leadership in the collaborative should be rotated. Shortly thereafter, the coordinator's role was eliminated because of lack of funding.

The experience of the teachers in the original team may indicate how complex it will be for teachers to effect change in their own communities, and how difficult it may be for seasoned practitioners to learn from each other--to seek the advice and consultation of other teachers. The culture of teaching does not encourage collaborative discussion, and collaborative structures do not exist in most schools.

It is possible that such structures could have been put in place so that other teachers could have learned from the original team in the Learning/Teaching Collaborative, and that likewise the original team could have listened more closely to the concerns of the other teachers. However, this did not happen, and few efforts were made to make instructional use of the successes and the failures of the team that had developed the project.

In addition, Troen was more interested in spreading the project's components than she was in developing leadership skills among teachers. No effort was made to build leadership training into the project, and thus, though there was some discontent with Troen's leadership, no other teachers were being trained to take leadership. Teachers reacted to Troen's leadership, but none attempted to share it. Thus, leadership was vested in one individual, not in an increasing number of teacher leaders.

During the summer following the third year (1990), Brookline school officials informed the collaborative that they could no longer fund the coordinator's position, and the Learning/Teaching Collaborative entered its fourth year without a coordinator. Teachers on the Management Team agreed

to rotate leadership of the collaborative, and the collaboration did not expand further that year.

As the project approached its fifth year, it seemed likely that funding would be drastically reduced. But, in May 1991, Vivian Troen solicited the support of two Devotion School parents with connections to private foundations, who arranged for $18,000 to supplement Brookline and Wheelock's diminished funding. Then, in the summer of 1991, the project received a three-year FIRST grant from the federal government. Troen assumed the position of part-time project coordinator and the team entered its fifth year with adequate funding.

Conclusion

Many factors combine to make teacher leadership a complicated phenomenon. Because of teachers' low status in the established hierarchy of schools, it is difficult for teacher leaders to emerge as credible forces of change. And, when teachers do emerge as organizational leaders, their lack of formal authority, and the equal-status nature of the teaching career, complicate their efforts to influence their peers. However, teacher leadership does have the potential for effectively restructuring schools. Teachers are more likely to support plans and strategies for reform that they develop themselves, and for that reason, the plans teachers devise may be better implemented and more likely to succeed than plans developed elsewhere in the school district's hierarchy.

Teacher leadership will not succeed, or even occur in more than a few isolated places, however, unless serious thought is given by policymakers, school district and college officials to the importance of altering authority patterns in school, encouraging teachers to take leadership roles, and providing specific leadership skill development once teacher leaders are identified.

-- When teachers take leadership roles in schools, significant and positive changes can occur, but taking leadership is not easy for teachers, and many roadblocks stand in the way.

Teacher leadership can provide a potentially powerful means of reforming schools. The Teaching Project was teacher-initiated and teacher-

driven, met the needs of its veteran practitioners, and enriched the learning environment of children. But the far-reaching tenets of the project challenged many of the traditional ways of doing things in schools, and conflicted directly with established norms of the school's functioning. Such a project demanded leadership that was determined to persist, and was knowledgeable in the politics and structure of schools. With less determined and informed teacher leadership, the project could not have survived.

This project demonstrates the limits of teacher leadership as well as its potential. The success of the project demanded sustained political maneuvering and determined energy. At the present time, teacher leaders are in short supply, and teacher-initiated restructuring cannot rest on the shoulders of these few individuals. Many teacher leaders must emerge if teachers are to become credible forces for change, and have a widespread impact on school reform. Noting that "Teachers seem impatient with the long and often arduous process of collaborative planning, learning and adaption necessary to make innovations successful," McLaughlin and Marsh report:

> Ironically, teachers want to give priority to their role as classroom teachers when the Rand [Change Agent] study suggests that their role as collaborative planners has become increasingly important in the context of creating ongoing problem-solving capabilities within schools. (p.229)

A systematic means of identifying, nurturing and training teacher leaders must be developed if teacher leadership is to become a viable alternative to "top-down" reform.

-- The school principal inevitably plays a critical role in teacher-initiated school reform.

The presence of a supportive principal who is committed to change will be critical in developing and sustaining teacher-initiated restructuring projects. Without the assistance of Devotion School's principal, the Teaching Project could never have emerged or flourished. A principal must not only create an atmosphere in his/her building that supports experimentation and change efforts. Once a teacher-initiated project is developed, the principal must provide information, team-building skills and help maintain

communication among faculty. Without such strategic actions, the good ideas of one group of teachers can easily be seen as an annoyance or a threat to other teachers.

-- It will take strong interpersonal,communication and administrative skills as well and an understanding of organizations and school culture in order for teachers to successfully become leaders at the levels of the school and school district.

Teacher leaders will need instruction in conflict resolution and team- and consensus-building, and they must acquire many administrative skills, from the ability to develop and manage a budget, to the ability to raise funds and evaluate programs. And perhaps most importantly, it will be essential for teachers who are interested in the organizational reform of schools to gain an understanding of the culture of schools and teaching, and an awareness of the inherent difficulty of making change in bureaucratic, segmented hierarchies. Finally, teachers must come to accept their colleagues as potential leaders, and realize that the benefits can be great when teachers lead their peers.

-- An expanded teacher-initiated project will not look exactly like the original project.

When the Teaching Project expanded to more teams and more schools, its new members tailored the originators' ideas to suit their particular needs and situations. This troubled the initiating teachers. Project expansion will demand flexibility and open-mindedness on the part of the initiators. As the expanded Teaching Project demonstrates, teacher leaders cannot assume that their good ideas will be adopted without alteration.

--Teacher-initiated school restructuring projects call for a reexamination of traditional patterns of power and authority in schools and school districts.

While the Teaching Project flourished internally, it confronted a series of obstacles in the school and school district. A look at systems theory indicates how hard it is to create change in a bureaucratic system such as the school.

What the teachers were asking the system to do was to change in many ways and to change all at once. They were introducing new ways of working and new ways of teaching. They wanted to restructure teaching and aspects of the school in which they worked. The school and school district, on the other hand, were generally satisfied with the way things were. The patterns of authority and power were well-established and understood by both teachers and administrators in the school district. As Bolman and Deal note:

> Systems maintain a dynamic equilibrium (steady state) such that the basic "character" of the organization (manifested in recurring cycles of events) is highly stable, even though the organization evolves over time in response to internal or environmental changes. (1988, p. 227)

In the case of the Teaching Project, change emanated from project teachers and challenged both ends of the hierarchy. It disrupted the system's equilibrium--the top, which was used to making policy decisions, and the bottom, teachers, who were committed to the equal-status of teachers.

To some extent the Teaching Project was a danger to the stable system of roles and procedures at the college and the school district, and as such, it was less likely to receive their unconditional support. For example, the teachers questioned the way the school district regularly delivered special education services to children, and the teachers demanded that they have a regular accounting and some control over the funding for their project. These actions did not endear the teachers to those at other levels of the school hierarchy.

As one of the Teaching Project participants stated, in describing her perception of why it seemed so hard to implement change in Brookline, and why it seemed easier for the teams in Boston to make dramatic changes in their work: "When things aren't that bad (like they are in Brookline), the status quo is attractive. When things are in a crisis mode (like they are in Boston), people are looking for anything that works, and then they'll change things."

The Teaching Project was competing with many programs for scarce funds, and though the directing authorities recognized it as a good idea, they also did not see it as one that merited the kind of support that would have been necessary for the project to thrive.

Since it was always a teacher-initiated idea, and there was no real effort by administrators to institutionalize the project, the Teaching Project always

functioned at the behest of someone else. It was never a regular line item on anyone's budget, and funding was always pieced together. It was not that the institutions did not support the project; it was that they did not support the project enough. Supporting the project sufficiently would have meant that the two institutions would have had to change in important ways themselves. No structural changes were made in either institution, and the project affected a relatively small number of individuals.

Barbara Neufeld's conclusion in her 1988 study of the six Massachusetts projects that were attempting to become Professional Development Schools (one of which was the Teaching Project) still holds true in 1991:

> What is characteristic of the programs to date is that they do not change or require change on the part of the larger organization in which they exist. They make a difference, to be sure, to the institutions, and they require some tinkering with scheduling and the allocation of teachers' time, but they are separate entities rather than operating systems for the core organization...They enriched segments of school life without seeking to change the school. (p. 27)

It can certainly be argued that the Teaching Project was successful. It expanded from three classroom teachers and three interns in the first year to 18 interns and classroom teachers in the fourth year. It expanded from one college and one school system, to two colleges and two school systems. The fact remained, though, that administrators did not share the vision of the founders and that they did not make the decisive moves to reallocate the funds in order to expand and sustain the project.

As a Wheelock faculty member noted in the fourth year of the project:

> Teachers shouldn't hold educational change on their shoulders....it seems to me that it's always an alternative between top down and bottom up and I don't believe it's either one or the other. I don't think you can do anything bottom up unless you change the top as well...so you and Vivian cannot continue to bear the weight of this project unless the system is willing to institutionalize it in some way from the top down. Just like it can't be continued at Wheelock by one person unless there's really an institutional commitment to it. And it really doesn't matter how effective we are, or how good we are at what we're doing--in either institution. I think it has to do with the willingness at the top to eventually make the changes that allow it to grow beyond one or two individuals.

Lynne Miller delivers the same message when she notes in her article about two unsucessful restructuring projects, one teacher-initiated, the other initiated by administration:

> ....A balance of elements... seems essential. As schools restructure they have to be about something (product) and have a way to get where they want to go (process). They need to provide for administrative and teacher leadership, for "top down" as well as "bottom up" authority and power. (p. 18)

There are a number of important conclusions to be drawn from this study of teacher leadership in the Teaching Project at Devotion School. One is that it is possible for teachers to successfully initiate a substantive school change project that effectively meets their needs and can be innovative and interesting to others in the school community. Another is that no matter where school change originates it will necessarily affect other parts of the organization, and that though school change can effectively be generated by teachers, that group must be able to enlist the support of those at other levels and in other positions in the school system in order to succeed. Finally, if school change is to involve both colleges and school districts, both institutions must be willing to examine their organizational structures and be willing to risk significant structural alteration.

There is a necessary interplay between a given environment and any plan that seeks to produce a change in that environment. The environment in which the Teaching Project functioned was not hostile to change, and still change did not come easily. If, in a small liberal school system that claims to support teacher empowerment, teachers encounter personal and political difficulties in making change, we can anticipate even greater difficulty in larger, more impersonal systems with less flexible organizational structures. If teachers are not prepared for such challenges, there is even less likelihood that their projects will develop, or come to fruition.

Methodology

My situation as the co-founder of the Teaching Project made me particularly sensitive to the importance of building checks on researcher bias into my study. Therefore, during the four years of data collection, I obtained information about the Teaching Project from as many sources as possible. I am strongly committed to understanding the change process in schools and to examining the process of teacher-initiated change, and I had no interest in simply portraying the development of the Teaching Project in a favorable, but biased way.

My earlier research on the teaching profession (Freedman, Jckson and Boles, 1983) had demonstrated the value of the repeated return interview in obtaining rich data from interviewees. I employed this technique extensively in my study of the Teaching Project. I formally interviewed each of the project teachers and the school principal three times during the course of the project's first year and twice during the second year in hour-long interviews, using interview guides developed to monitor their responses to the project (See Appendix - Sample Interview Guide). I wrote fieldnotes after each interview, collected memos and correspondence sent to and from the team of teachers, and obtained evaluations of the project commissioned by the Town of Brookline and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Field Center for Teaching and Learning (Medina, 1989; Price, 1988; Neufeld; 1988).

I observed a number of team meetings each year, and, late in the project's second and third years, I spent a six-hour "day of vision" with the team as they assessed the year and made plans for the the next year. I also attended informational meetings with parents, negotiations meetings with representatives from Wheelock College, and meetings with state and school officials as the project began to expand and the school district and the college took a greater interest in it. I wrote fieldnotes after each of these meetings.

In the second year of the project I interviewed all the members of the new Devotion third and fourth grade team.

In the fourth year of the project, I interviewed team members and the school principal one more time. And, in order to gain a four-year perspective on the Teaching Project from individuals outside the project, I supplemented my earlier interviews with interviews of teachers and administrators who were not part of the project, but who had played a role in the project's

development or had been affected by the Teaching Project. These individuals were chosen for their understanding of the project in the broader contexts of school, school district and college community, and for their policy making positions and their power to determine the project's future.

I interviewed a veteran guidance counselor at Devotion School and a teacher member of the second team at Devotion as well as Brookline's superintendent of schools, the assistant superintendent of schools, the president of Wheelock College, the dean of Wheelock's Graduate School, and the Wheelock faculty member who co-teaches the interns' curriculum seminar.

I have used this additional data, as well as the minutes of Steering Committee and Management Team meetings, my own field notes from the June 1990 three-day training for teachers, and field notes written since I returned to teaching in September, to present as well-rounded and as in-depth a picture as I can of a school change experiment developed and sustained by teachers.

Data Analysis

I used a number of strategies for data analysis. Because I was keenly aware of the need to pay attention to my own possible biases, I triangulated my data against reports by outside evaluators, thereby attempting to check my data "against other, already validated, measures of the same skill or construct" (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

My main strategy for analysis was to code my interviews and field notes into categories, many of which I developed for my study of the project's first year, and some of which emerged as I categorized the data from the second and fourth years (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Patton, 1980; Erickson, 1985).

I also developed a series of time-ordered matrices to further my "understanding of the substance and meaning of the data base" (Miles and Huberman, 1984) and in order to give me "reasonable answers to the questions" I was asking.

In my data analysis, I used my categorized and coded data and the various matrices I developed to answer the question of how teachers responded to their work in the Teaching Project. In addition, I continually double-checked my findings by comparing them with other researchers' work on the Teaching Project. Most importantly, by using this assortment of analysis

techniques I was able to "remain open to disconfirming evidence when it appears" (Miles and Huberman, p. 216).

I recognize that I cannot assume my findings will be generalizable to school sites across the country. I believe, however, that my thesis highlights some of the important features of school culture that might otherwise be overlooked as policymakers develop proposals for extensive changes in this nation's schools.

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